

Mischief Book 1- The Red Pyramid

by Lord Jake the Warrior

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Summary: "Egypt isn't the be all, end all of the sheer insanity that is mythology. Our story is over. But the real story is about to begin" AU of The Kane Chronicles, starring Hiccup, because we all love Hiccup.

1. Prologue

My name is Carter Kane. This is the truth.

If you're reading this it means that we failed. Our friend has betrayed us and the world is about to end.

On the other hand, if you aren't it means that we put our trust in the right people.

But I'm probably getting ahead of myself. [Sadie says that I'm rambling. Thanks]

If you're reading this you've probably heard how we beat Set and Apophis. You know how our story came to an end.

What you don't know is that it isn't over.

We found out something that no-one ever guessed. We're not the only ones out there. Egypt isn't the be all, end all of the sheer insanity that is mythology. Greece, Rome, Norse, there all out there.

Our story is over. But the real story is about to begin

A/N: This is just a taster. The best is yet to come.

Sorry I haven't updated A Good Family Goes to War. I've had exams and I can't really get back into it yet. This is sorta a cure to my writers block. Enjoy.

2. Chapter 1- A French Guy almost kills us

****Carter****

****Chapter 1****

****A French Guy almost kills us****

"You forget your place," Desjardins snapped. "These two are guilty and must be destroyed."

My throat started closing up. I looked at Sadie. If we had to make a run for it down that long hall, I didn't like our chancesâ€|

Then a voice sounded from behind us, young, but with a mischievous glint. It spoke in a whisper, yet boomed all over the room, making it seem as if the one speaking was standing right next to us.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you."

Instantly Zia and Desjardins grabbed their boomerangs, Desjardins drawing it out of his robes. The old man looked up and stood, stumbling slightly from the fast motion. He snapped a word, and both Zia and Desjardins put their weapons away. The old man-Iskandar, I remembered-then spoke a fast paced phrase in another, more guttural language.

A boy, barely older than sixteen, stepped out of the shadows. He had reddish-brown hair, which hung around his head in a way that made him look like that guy-Aragorn-from Lord of the Rings [_Yes, Sadie, I watched Lord of the Rings. I'm not _completely_ clueless._] His eyes were a deep emerald green, and had both a _don't mess with me or I'll kill you in two seconds flat _look, but also a look that made me think of the look Sadie got whenever she was doing something wrong [_Yes Sadie, that look._]

Iskandar nodded at him.

"Haddock." He said warmly, as if greeting an old friend.

The boy nodded at him "Iskandar. It's been far too long."

Iskandar nodded, and then let out a series of gut wrenching coughs that made him double over.

Both Zia and Desjardins made to help the old man, but Haddock got there first. He helped the old man to his feet and let him to his throne, whispering with him in Ptolemaic Greek all the way.

After he had placed him down he gave Iskandar a little bow, keeping his eyes on him all the while. When he finally turned around, it was to find Desjardins and Zia glaring at him distrustfully.

"Who are you?" Desjardins demanded, waving his boomerang threateningly

Rather than look intimidated by an angry Frenchman waving a piece of wood at him, Haddock looked amused.

"My name, as you might have guessed, is Haddock Norseman." He said the sentence with such a look in his eye that I couldn't laugh at his ridiculous name.

Sadie, on the other handâ€¦

"Haddock? Seriously?"

Haddock glared at her, and she immediately shut up. It was rather funny, actually. [_Ow! Sadie, what was that for!_] Then he grinned at her, the same kind of dorky grin I saw on Dad's face when he found a new piece of pottery or something. [_Sadie says I've inherited it. Thanks, Sis!_]

"Yeah, my parents hated me." He said.

Both Sadie and I instantly relaxed. Desjardins, on the other hand, had stiffened instantly after hearing Haddock's name.

"How do you know our master?" Zia demanded.

"Iskandar has been my friend for a long, _long_, time." Haddock replied.

"He speaks the truth, Zia" Iskandar replied, voice hoarse. "Many times has Haddock saved my life."

"As many times as you have saved mine, minn brÃ³ðir." Haddock replied, placing a finger on his forehead and inclining his head.

Iskandar rose from his seat, beckoning.

"Come, Lokisson." He said, turning and walking, or more accurately stumbling, to the door behind the throne. "We have much to discuss. And, Desjardins, the children are not to be harmed. Zia, you shall test them in the morning." The way he said it, not leaving anytime for discussion or argument, just turning and walking away, made me glad he wasn't trying to kill us.

Haddock walked brazenly past us, offering a two-fingered salute to Desjardins that could easily be translated as an insulting gesture.

Desjardins looked ready to explode. He swept his robes away from his feet and marched behind the throne.

"The Chief Lector will allow Zia to test you," he growled. "Meanwhile, I will seek out the truth â€" or the lies â€" in your story. You will be punished for the lies." So saying, he turned and swept out of the room.

Zia turned towards us, her expression grim. "I will show you to your quarters. In the morning, your testing begins. We will see what magic you know, and how you know it."

I wasn't sure what she meant by that, but I exchanged an uneasy look with Sadie.

"Sounds fun," Sadie ventured. "And if we fail this test?"

Zia regarded her coldly. "This is not the sort of test you fail, Sadie Kane. You pass or you die."

"Joy." I muttered, my mind and body exhausted by the events of today, yet somehow I knew I wouldn't get any sleep. My mind turned to the strange Haddock Norseman. When I saw him, I felt something in me screaming things like _Treacheryâ€|Breaking the Law..._and always, that one phrase, repeated over and over again:

Son of Lokiâ€|Child of Mischief

Andâ€| That's Chapter One, folks!

Before you ask, yes, that's Hiccup. Seems different, doesn't he?

This isn't going to be the Hiccup we all know and love though. He's a few hundred years further down the line, and he's also had something happen to him in the past (Not giving anything away)

Thanks for reading, and review, tell me what you think.

Thanks

Lord Jake the Warrior

**Translations**

_**Minn brÃ³ir**__- My brother_

3. Chapter 2- I talk to an Old Magician

A/N: Right, for the next few chapters I'll be following the book pretty closely, but it'll change after the kids leave the House of Life. Soâ€| next chapter

Disclaimer: I'm hatching a plot to steal the ownership of How to Train Your Dragon and the Kane Chronicles from DreamWorks and Rick Riordan, but until that time, I don't own them.

****Sadie****

****I talk to a **_**really**_** Old Magician****

They took Carter to a different dormitory, so I don't know how he slept. But _I_ couldn't get a wink.

My mind was full of what had happened over the last couple of days, but it was mainly centred on that boy- what was his name? Hadeck? Haddock that was it. The way he had talked, the way he had walked brazenly past two people who could kill him with a flick of his fingers, made me not know what to think of him. But that wasn't all. A single thought kept bothering me: an urge I just couldn't shake. Finally I crept out of bed and tugged on my boots.

I unlocked the door with that trick that Zia had did in the Cairo

Airport broom closet, and sneaked through the First Nome. I wasn't sure what to think of my brother after our argument in New York, so I decided to do this particular bit of exploring alone, and after a few wrong turns I found my way back to the Hall of Ages. What was I up to, you may ask? I certainly didn't want to meet Monsieur Evil again or creepy old Lord Salamander. But I did want to see those images " memories, Zia had called them.

I opened the bronze doors. Inside, the Hall seemed deserted. I couldn't help but remember what had happened when Haddock walked in.

Carter hadn't seen it, because he's unobservant that way [Shut up, Carter. You know it's true.] But I had. When Haddock had stepped into the room, the hieroglyphs that Lord Salamander had been making scurried to the other end of the room, like they were afraid of him. It was disconcerting, if you combined that with the voice whispering curses in ancient Egyptian in my head.

I took a few nervous steps. I wanted another look at the Age of the Gods. On our first trip through the hall, something about those images had shaken me. I knew Carter thought I'd gone into a dangerous trance, and Zia had warned that the scenes would melt my brain, but I had a feeling she was just trying to scare me off. I felt a connection to those images, like there was an answer within " a vital piece of information I needed.

I stepped off the carpet and approached the curtain of golden light. I saw sand dunes shifting in the wind, storm clouds brewing, crocodiles sliding down the Nile. I saw a vast hall full of revellers. I touched the image.

A/N: I'm not going to write her vision of Osiris, Isis and Set, because 1) It's basically exactly the same, and 2) It doesn't really advance the plot that much. So, with that out of the way, onwards!_

Just when I thought my heart would burst, I felt a hand on my shoulder. The images evaporated.

The old master, Iskandar, stood next to me, his face pinched with concern. Glowing hieroglyphs danced round him.

"Forgive the interruption," he said in perfect English. "But you were almost dead." That's when my knees turned to water, and I lost consciousness.

When I awoke, I was curled at Iskandar's feet on the steps below the empty throne. We were alone in the hall, which was mostly dark except for the light from the hieroglyphs that always seemed to glow around him. "Welcome back," he said. "You're lucky you survived."

I sat up. That was a mistake. My head felt like it was on fire. Scratch that, my head felt like it was on fire in a fruit blender on a god-damned rollercoaster.

Iskandar placed a hand on my shoulder. Gently, but firmly, he set me down on the steps.

"You've just absorbed a great deal of magic into your body. Give

yourself a while to get used to it."

"Absorbed Magic?" I asked

Iskandar smiled. "You thought they were just memories? They are living essences of magic. The further down the hall you get, the less magic there is. There is little to no magic in the modern age. But what you just bore witness to was the time of the gods, where magic was immense."

"You speak perfect English." I noticed. I know not exactly the best time to notice it, but that had been bugging me ever since he spoke to us earlier on that day.

Iskandar gave a soft laugh. "I learn it from Haddock, a long time ago. Well, to be more specific, we learnt together."

"English isn't his birth tongue either?" I asked

Iskandar shook his head. "But never mind that. What did you see in your vision?"

I probably should've kept quiet. I didn't want to be turned into a bug for breaking any rules, and the vision had terrified me especially the moment when I'd changed into the bird of prey. But Iskandar's kindly expression made it hard to hold back. I ended up telling him everything. Well, almost everything. I left out the bit about the good-looking boy and, yes, I know it was silly, but I was embarrassed. I reckoned that part could've been my own crazed imagination at work, as Ancient Egyptian gods could not have been that gorgeous.

Iskandar sat for a moment, tapping his staff against the steps.

"You saw a very old event, Sadie Set taking the throne of Egypt by force. He hid Osiris's coffin, you know, and Isis searched the entire world to find it."

"So she got him back eventually?"

"Not exactly. Osiris was resurrected but only in the Underworld. He became the king of the dead. When their son, Horus, grew up, Horus challenged Set for the throne of Egypt and won after many hard battles. That is why Horus was called the Avenger. As I said an old story, but one that the gods have repeated many times in our history."

"Repeated?"

"The gods follow patterns. In some ways they are quite predictable: acting out the same squabbles, the same jealousies down through the ages. Only the settings change, and the hosts." There was that word again: hosts. I thought about the poor woman in the New York museum who'd turned into the goddess Serket.

"In my vision," I said, "Isis and Osiris were married. Horus was about to be born as their son. But in another story Carter told me, all three of them were siblings, children of the sky goddess."

"Yes," Iskandar agreed. "This can be confusing for those who do not know the nature of gods. They cannot walk the earth in their pure form â€" at least, not for more than a few moments. They must have hosts."

"Humans, you mean."

"Or powerful objects, such as statues, amulets, monuments, certain models of cars. But they prefer human form. You see gods have great power, but only humans have creativity, the power to change history rather than simply repeat it. Humans can â€" how do you moderns say it â€" think outside the cup."

"The box." I corrected

Iskandar sighed. "Haddock will never let me hear the end of that slip up. He loves it when I act my age."

There was that infuriating boy again. I had no idea who he was, and every piece of information I got was even more confusing than the last.

"Who is he?" I asked Iskandar.

"Haddock?" he asked. At my nod, he continued. "Haddock isâ€" an enigma. He is old, almost as old as me, but so young at heart. He is cynical, yet has such hope in humanity. He can never be trusted, but is completely trustworthy. In all my years of knowing him, I have yet to fully understand him."

"That's not an answer." I said

Iskandar laughed "No, no, I suppose it's not. You are a remarkable young girl. You remind me of your mother."

My mouth fell open. "You knew her?"

"Of course. She trained here, as did your father. Your mother â€" well, aside from being a brilliant scientist, she had the gift of divination. One of the most difficult forms of magic, and she was the first in centuries to possess it."

"Divination?"

"Seeing the future. Tricky business, never perfect, but she saw things that made her seek advice from â€" unconventional places, things that made even this old man question some long-held beliefs â€" "

He drifted off into Memoryland again, which was infuriating enough when my grandparents did it, but when it's an all-powerful magician who has valuable information it's enough to drive one mad.

"Iskandar?"

He looked at me with mild surprise, as if he'd forgotten I was there. "I'm sorry, Sadie. I should come to the point: you have a hard path ahead of you, but I'm convinced now it's a path you must take, for all our sakes. Your brother will need your guidance."

I was tempted to laugh.

"Carter, need my guidance? For what? What path do you mean?"

"All in good time. Things must take their course." Typical adult answer. I tried to bite back my frustration.

"And what if I need guidance?"

"You can trust Haddock." Iskandar said instantly. "And Zia. They are the most trustworthy people I know. Rely on them and you cannot go wrong. But that is for later. For now you should rest, my dear. And it seems I, too, can rest at last."

He sounded sad but relieved. I didn't know what he was talking about, but he didn't give me the chance to ask.

"I am sorry our time together was so brief," he said. "Sleep well, Sadie Kane."

"But â€" Iskandar touched my forehead. And I fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

I woke up only once that night. Maybe I was dreaming, but I saw flaming hieroglyphs floating across my eyes, and strange chanting. I made to sit up, but a strange symbol floated over my eyes, kind of like a 'B', and I collapsed into sleep again.

**A/N: That's all folks! What do you think?**

**The symbol Sadie talks about is Bjarkan, the norse rune of sleep.**

**Thanks for reading!**

4. Chapter 3- How Zia lost her lesson

**A/N: Not really much to say about this chapter, just enjoy.**

**Disclaimer: I own Toothless. Nothing else. Just let me have Toothless!**

****Sadie****

****How Zia lost her lesson****

I woke to a bucket of ice cold water in the face.

"Sadie! Get up," Zia said.

"God!" I yelled. "Was that necessary?"

"No," Zia admitted. I wanted to strangle her, except I was dripping wet, shivering and still disorientated. How long had I slept? It felt like only a few minutes, but the dormitory was empty. All the other cots were made. The girls must've already gone to their morning lessons.

"We're meeting Carter and Haddock in the cleansing room."

"I just got a bath, thanks very much. What I need is a proper breakfast."

"The cleansing prepares you for magic." Zia slung her bag of tricks over her shoulder and unfolded the long black staff she'd used in New York. "If you survive, we'll see about food."

I was tired of being reminded that I might die, but I got dressed and followed her out. After another endless series of tunnels, we came to a chamber with a roaring waterfall. There was no ceiling, just a shaft above us that seemed to go up forever. Water fell from the darkness into a fountain, splashing over a five-metre-tall statue of that bird-headed god. What was his name â€" Tooth? No, Thoth. The water cascaded over his head, collected in his palms, then spilled out into the pool.

Carter stood with Haddock beside the fountain. He was dressed in linen with Dad's workbag over one shoulder and his sword strapped to his back. His hair was rumpled, as if he hadn't slept well. At least he hadn't been doused in ice water. Seeing him, I felt a strange sense of relief. I thought about Iskandar's words last night: _Your brother will need your guidance._

Haddock was dressed in a plain blood red T-shirt, with black jeans and his long hair tied up behind his face in a fashionable ponytail. His eyes had a haunted, almost grieving look, and his hands were clenched into fists. When he caught me staring, he frowned, as if confused.

Zia went to a nearby cabinet. She brought out three ceramic cups, dipped them into the fountain, and then offered them to us.

"Drink."

I glanced at Carter. "After you."

"It's only water," Zia assured me.

Haddock nodded. "Purified by contact with the statue. Old trick, really. Magicians have been using it for centuries."

Zia looked at him, and I can tell she was impressed. "You know our customs."

"Know them, and actively try to avoid them." Haddock agreed. "I don't think I'll drink, thanks. Nor have the tattoos."

"We get tattoos?" Carter asked

"Brilliant!" I said.

"On your tongue." Haddock added.

Zia frowned at him. "Without the proper preparation-"

"Let me guess," I said. "We'll die."

Zia nodded

Haddock chuckled "To kill me would be extremely ambitious." Somehow, I didn't think he was joking.

Zia frowned again at him, and then pulled a leather satchel out of the cabinet. "Carter will be allowed to keep your father's magic implements, plus a new staff and wand. Generally speaking, the wand is for defence; the staff is for offence, although, Carter, you may prefer to use your khopesh."

"Khopesh?"

"The curved sword," Zia said. "A favoured weapon of the pharaoh's guard. It can be used in combat magic. As for Haddock and Sadie, you will need a full kit."

"How come he gets Dad's kit?" I complained.

"He is the eldest," she said, as if that explained everything. Typical.

Zia tossed me and Haddock a leather satchel each. Inside was an ivory wand, a rod that I supposed turned into a staff, some paper, an ink set, a bit of twine and a lovely chunk of wax. I was less than thrilled.

"Come," Zia said, walking away with Haddock right behind her. "Let us go to the library."

The First Nome's library was like Amos's, but a hundred times bigger, with circular rooms lined with honeycomb shelves that seemed to go on forever, like the world's largest beehive. Clay shabti statues kept popping in and out, retrieving scroll canisters and disappearing, but we saw no other people.

Zia brought us to a wooden table and spread out a long, blank papyrus scroll. She picked up a stylus and dipped it in ink. "The Egyptian word shesh means scribe or writer, but it can also mean-

"-Magician." Haddock said, twirling a stylus in his hand and looking bored.

Zia frowned at him again, which seemed to be her default expression.

Haddock continued, undaunted. "This is because magic, at its most basic, turns words into reality. You will create a scroll. Using your own magic, you will send power into the words on paper. When spoken, the words will unleash the magic. I heard the same speech from Iskandar years ago. Can we get on with it?"

He handed his stylus to Carter.

"I don't get it," he protested.

'A simple word," Zia suggested, desperately trying to regain control of the lesson. "It can be anything."

"In English?"

"If you must." Haddock said "Any language will work, but hieroglyphics are best. They are the language of creation, of magic, of Ma'at. You must be careful, however."

Before he could explain, Carter drew a simple hieroglyph of a bird.

The picture wriggled, peeled itself off the papyrus and flew away. It splattered Carter's head with some hieroglyphic droppings on its way out. I couldn't help laughing at Carter's expression.

"A beginner's mistake," Zia said, scowling at me to be quiet. "If you use a symbol that stands for something alive, it is wise to write it only partially â€" leave off a wing, or the legs. Otherwise the magic you channel could make it come alive."

"And poop on its creator." Carter sighed, wiping off his hair with a bit of scrap papyrus. "That's why our father's wax statue, Doughboy, has no legs, right?"

Haddock nodded. "The same principle. Now, try again."

Carter stared at Zia's staff, which was covered in hieroglyphics. He picked the most obvious one and copied it on the papyrus â€" the symbol for fire.

Uh-oh, I thought. But the word did not come alive, which would've been rather exciting. It simply dissolved.

"Keep trying," Zia urged.

"I don't think he has enough strength left." Haddock said. "Look at him."

He definitely looked exhausted. His face was beaded with sweat.

"Perhaps we should try something else," He suggested. "Iskandar tells me you are a great combat magician. He saw your progress with the _ba_."

Carter gasped. "He saw that?"

Haddock nodded. "I think we need something moreâ€¦ physical, to awaken your magic potential."

He turned to Zia. "I think I'll take him to Luxor now. Meet up with us after Sadie is ready."

Zia scowled "I do not take orders from you, Norseman."

Haddock smirked "No. But you do take orders from the Chief Lector. If I were to call him down here, who would he agree with?"

Zia scowled at him again. Grumbling under her breath, she impatiently batted them both away.

Great. Now I was stuck with Zia for a teacher. Could this day get any worse?

We spent the next few hours practicing scroll magic, and by the end of it I was sweating harder than Gramps after a day of exercise.

We used another magic gateway to get to Luxor, which Zia summoned right on the library wall. We stepped into a circle of swirling sand and popped out on the other side, covered in dust and grit, in front of some ruins. The harsh sunlight almost blinded me.

Haddock and Carter were already there and, I had to admit, I was impressed. Haddock had somehow got four pillars into the courtyard of the ruins, and was currently having Carter jump between them whilst he threw fireballs at him. Carter was actually rather athletic, now that I saw him.

As they saw us, Carter jumped down from the pillars and Haddock made them vanish with a flick of his hand.

"Finally." Haddock said "We thought you weren't coming. We were placing bets on what had happened." He turned to Carter "Was your idea the purple-people-eater, or the giant fish?"

Carter scowled playfully at him. He seemed much calmer around Haddock than he was yesterday. "You had both. Mine was that Sadie was being annoying-"

"-Oy!-" I yelled. My admiration of Carter's athletic skill only went so far.

"-and that they were simply busy. As I detect an absence of purple-people-eaters, or giant fishes-"

"-Fishy." Haddock corrected.

"Whatever." Carter said "I conclude that I win. Pay up."

Haddock scowled, and then turned his back to us. He whispered something in another language, and I saw a symbol, kind of like an 'F', but with the lines slanted upwards. He turned back to us, and handed Carter a few gold coins.

**(A/N: This rune is Fe, the rune of wealth)**

My eyes widened. "Where did you get that?"

Haddock frowned at me. "Get what?"

"Tha-" I looked at Carter's hand. The gold coins had gone. "Never mind."

"I still can't believe we're in Luxor." Carter said. "That's miles from Cairo."

"And that amazes you after teleporting from New York?" Both Haddock and I said at the same time. We both scowled at each other.

"Luxor is a modern name," Zia said. "This was once the city of Thebes. This temple was one of the most important in Egypt. It is the best place for us to practise."

"Because it's already destroyed?" I asked.

Zia gave me one of her famous scowls. "No, Sadie â€" because it is still full of magic. And it was sacred to your family."

"Our family?" Carter asked.

Zia didn't explain, as usual. She just gestured for us to follow.

"I don't like those ugly sphinxes," I mumbled as we walked down the path.

"Those ugly sphinxes are creatures of law and order," Haddock said, "protectors of Egypt. They're on our side."

"If you say so."

Carter nudged me as we passed the obelisk. "You know the missing one is in Paris."

I rolled my eyes. "Thank you, Mr Wikipedia. I thought they were in New York and London."

"That's a different pair," Haddock added, like I was supposed to care. "The other Luxor obelisk is in Paris."

"Wish I was in Paris," I said. "Lot better than this place."

We walked into a dusty courtyard surrounded by crumbling pillars and statues with various missing body parts. Still, I could tell the place had once been quite impressive.

"Where are the people?" I asked. "Middle of the day, winter holidays. Shouldn't there be loads of tourists?"

Zia made a distasteful expression.

"Usually, yes. I have encouraged them to stay away for a few hours."

"How?"

"Mortal minds are easy to manipulate." Haddock explained. The way he said 'mortals' was weird. It was almost like he wasn't one.

"Now, to the duel." Zia summoned her staff and drew two circles in the sand about ten metres apart. She directed me to stand in one of them and Carter in the other.

"I've got to duel him?" I asked. I have to admit, the prospect of fighting Carter after that bit on the bridge and the training he'd been receiving from Haddock was frightening.

Perhaps Carter was thinking the same thing, because he'd started to sweat. "What if we do something wrong?" he asked.

"I will oversee the duel," Zia promised. "We will start slowly. The first magician to knock the other out of his or her circle wins."

"But we haven't been trained!" I protested.

"One learns by doing," Haddock said. "This is not school, Sadie. You cannot learn magic by sitting at a desk and taking notes. You can only learn magic by doing magic."

"But â€"

"Summon whatever power you can," Zia said. "Use whatever you have available. Begin!" I looked at Carter doubtfully. Use whatever I have? I opened the leather satchel and looked inside. A lump of wax? Probably not. I drew the wand and rod. Immediately, the rod expanded until I was holding a two-metre-long white staff. Carter drew his sword, though I couldn't imagine what he'd do with it. Rather hard to hit me from ten metres away.

I wanted this over, so I raised my staff like I'd seen Zia do. I thought the word Fire.

A small flame sputtered to life on the end of the staff. I willed it to get bigger. The fire momentarily brightened, but then my eyesight went fuzzy. The flame died. I fell to my knees, feeling as if I'd run a marathon.

"You okay?" Carter called.

"No," I complained.

"If she knocks herself out, do I win?" he asked.

"Shut up!" I said.

"Sadie, you must be careful," Zia called. "You drew from your own reserves, not from the staff. You can quickly deplete your magic."

I got shakily to my feet. "Explain?"

"A magician begins a duel full of magic, the way you might be full after a good meal â€" Haddock replied.

"Which I never got," I reminded him.

"Each time you do magic," he continued, "you expend energy. You can draw energy from yourself, but you must know your limits. Otherwise you could exhaust yourself, or worse."

I swallowed and looked at my smouldering staff. "How much worse?"

"You could literally burn up." I hesitated, thinking how to ask my next question without saying too much.

"But I've done magic before. Sometimes it doesn't exhaust me. Why?"

Haddock gestured to Zia. From around her neck, Zia unclasped an amulet. She threw it into the air, and with a flash it turned into a giant vulture. The massive black bird soared over the ruins. As soon as it was out of sight, Zia extended her hand and the amulet appeared in her palm.

"Magic can be drawn from many sources," she said. "It can be stored in scrolls, wands or staffs. Amulets are especially powerful. Magic can also be drawn straight from Ma'at, using the Divine Words, but this is difficult. Or â€" she locked eyes with me â€" "it can be summoned from the gods."

"Why are you looking at me?" I demanded. "I didn't summon any gods. They just seem to find me!"

She put on her necklace but said nothing.

"Hold on," Carter said. "You claimed this place was sacred to our family."

"It was," Haddock agreed.

"But wasn't this â€" Carter frowned. "Didn't the pharaohs have a yearly festival here or something?"

"Indeed," Haddock said. "The pharaoh would walk down the processional path all the way from Karnak to Luxor. He would enter the temple and become one with the gods."

Zia cut in "Sometimes, this was purely ceremonial. Sometimes, with the great pharaohs like Ramesses, here â€" Zia pointed to one of the huge crumbling statues.

"They actually hosted the gods," I interrupted, remembering what Iskandar had said.

Zia narrowed her eyes. "And yet you claim to know nothing of your family's past."

"Wait a second," Carter protested. "You're saying we're related to â€" "

"The gods choose their hosts carefully," Haddock said. "They always prefer the blood of the pharaohs. When a magician has the blood of two royal families â€" "

I exchanged looks with Carter. Something Bast said came back to me: 'Your family was born to magic.' And Amos had told us that both sides of our family had a complicated history with the gods, and that Carter and I were the most powerful children to be born in centuries. A bad feeling settled over me, like an itchy blanket prickling against my skin. "Our parents were from different royal lines," I said. "Dad â€" he must've been descended from Narmer, the first pharaoh. I told you he looked like that picture!"

"That's not possible," Carter said. "That was five thousand years ago." But I could see his mind was racing. "Then the Fausts â€" He turned to Zia. "Ramesses the Great built this courtyard. You're telling me our mom's family is descended from him?"

Zia sighed. "Don't tell me your parents kept this from you. Why do you think you are so dangerous to us?"

"You think we're hosting gods," I said, absolutely stunned. "That's what you're worried about â€" just because of something our

great-times-a-thousand-grandparents did? That's completely daft."

"Then prove it!" Zia said. "Duel, and show me how weak your magic is!" She turned her back on us, as if we were completely unimportant.

Something inside me snapped. I'd had the worst two days ever. I'd lost my father, my home and my cat, been attacked by monsters and had ice water dumped on my head. Now this witch was turning her back on me. She didn't want to train us. She wanted to see how dangerous we were. Well, fine.

"Um, Sadie?" Carter called. He must've seen from my expression that I was beyond reason.

I focused on my staff. Maybe not fire. Cats have always liked me. Maybeâ€¦

I threw my staff straight at Zia. It hit the ground at her heels and immediately transformed into a snarling she-lion. Zia whirled in surprise, but then everything went wrong.

The lion turned and charged at Carter, as if she knew I was supposed to be duelling him. I had a split second to think: What have I done? Then the cat lunged â€¦ and Carter's form flickered.

He rose off the ground, surrounded by a golden holographic shell like the one Bast had used, except that his giant image was a warrior with the head of a falcon.

Carter swung his sword, and the falcon warrior did likewise, slicing the lion with a shimmering blade of energy.

The cat dissolved in midair, and my staff clattered to the ground, cut neatly in half.

Carter's avatar shimmered, then disappeared. He dropped to the ground and grinned. "Fun."

He didn't even look tired. Once I got over my relief that I hadn't killed him, I realized I didn't feel tired either. If anything, I had more energy. I turned defiantly to Zia. "Well? Better, right?"

Her face was ashen. "The falcon. He â€" he summoned â€" "

Before she could finish, footsteps pounded on the stones. A young initiate raced into the courtyard, looking panicked. Tears streaked his dusty face. He said something to Zia in hurried Arabic. When Zia got his message, she sat down hard in the sand. She covered her face and began to tremble. Carter and I left our duelling circles and ran to her. Haddock hung back, and I thought I saw tears on his face.

"Zia?" Carter said. "What's wrong?" She took a deep breath, trying to gather her composure. When she looked up, her eyes were red. She said something to the adept, who nodded and ran back the way he'd come.

"News from the First Nome," she said shakily. "Iskandarâ€¦" Her voice

broke. I felt as if a giant fist had punched me in the stomach. I thought about Iskandar's strange words last night: _It seems I, too, can rest at last_.

"He's dead, isn't he? That's what he meant."

Zia stared at me. "What do you mean: 'That's what he meant'?"

"I â€¦" I was about to say that I'd spoken with Iskandar the night before. Then I realized this might not be a good thing to mention. "Nothing. How did it happen?"

"In his sleep," Zia said. "He â€" he had been ailing for years, of course. But stillâ€¦"

"It's okay," Carter said. "I know he was important to you."

She wiped at her tears, then rose unsteadily. "You don't understand. Desjardins is next in line. As soon as he is named Chief Lector, he will order you executed."

"But we haven't done anything!" I said.

Zia's eyes flashed with anger. "You still don't realize how dangerous you are? You are hosting gods."

"Ridiculous," I insisted, but an uneasy feeling was building inside me. If it were true â€¦ no, it couldn't be! Besides, how could anyone, even a poxy old nutter like Desjardins, seriously execute children for something they weren't even aware of?

"He will order me to bring you in," Zia warned, "and I will have to obey."

"You can't!" Carter cried. "You saw what happened in the museum. We're not the problem. Set is. And if Desjardins isn't taking that seriously â€¦ well, maybe he's part of the problem, too." Zia gripped her staff. I was sure she was going to fry us with a fireball, but she hesitated.

"Zia." Haddock spoke, and I jumped. Somehow, he had snuck up behind us. If I had seen tears in his eyes, there weren't any now. "Alexander talked to me last night. He asked that I protect these children with my life. I intend to honour my promise."

Zia stared at him in shock "A-Alexander?"

Haddock smiled. "He told no-one about his secret, his greatest shame. Apart from you. He told you his true name. He told you who he really was."

"Sorry, what?" I asked. I was confused. What were they talking about?

Not looking at me, Haddock explained. "Iskandar is the Persian version of the name Alexander. Iskandar is Alexander, legacy of the Greek Gods Ares and Zeus. But you would know him as Alexander the Great."

**A/N: Ooh, twist!**

**The instant I learned what Iskandar was the Persian version of, I knew I was going to have this twist.**

**See you next time!**

5. Chapter 4- Haddock sets himself on fire

**A/N: I swear this is the last chapter almost exactly like the book! On my brother's life, I swear it!**

**Disclaimer: Don't own them, never will, move on.**

Carter

Haddock sets himself on Fire

Before we get to the talking squirrel, I should back up.

If you've read (or listened to, whatever) our first recording, you know where my _ba _went that night. Amos being captured by Set right? Well, after I woke up, I had a little talk with Zia. You know how it went, right? Me making a fool of myself, [That's Sadie telling me it's a common occurrence. Thanks Sis!] But eventually managing to ask her out on a date. My first date, and I was spending it with a psychopathic magician who wanted to kill me. A very beautiful psychopathic magician, but that's beside the point.

As I walked out of her little hiding place, I saw a familiar shape walking across the courtyard. Haddock.

I don't know why, but I got the strangest mixture of feelings whenever I saw Haddock. Part of me wanted to rely on him. Another part told me not to trust him. Yet another part of me wanted to kill him. I was a mess.

I'm not sure why, but I followed him across the courtyard, keeping out of sight. He ducked into a doorway, and I followed him, slipping through just as the door closed.

Haddock didn't see me. He was too busy drawing strange symbols on the dirt. I knew hieroglyphs, and these definitely weren't hieroglyphs. They lookedâ€¦ Nordic.

Haddock then fished in a pouch on his waist, and took out a handful of sand. He swirled it about in his hand, then threw it into the air, speaking three words that would shake our world for ages to come.

"Loki. Sigyn. Asgard."

The sand sparkled, flew in a kind of mini-whirlwind for a few minutes, and then formed into two figures.

One was tall, with pale, almost pasty skin, long dark hair held up in a fashionable ponytail. He had a small fledgling beard and a goatee, a lot like Dad's. He wore long flowing red robes and had mischievous emerald eyes. His nose was extremely pointed, a bit like Snape from

Harry Potter. He had a vaguely devilish look about him, and I sort of got the impression that was what he was hoping for.

The other figure was a woman. I couldn't help but stare at her, and it really wasn't hard to see why. She was beautiful. Not in a drop-dead-gorgeous kind of way, or even a heavy makeup and lipstick type. She was more likeâ€¦ I can't really describe it. Have you ever looked at your mom and thought that she was beautiful? Not in any creepy way, but just as a symbol of love and kindness. That's what this woman looked like. With a round, smiling face and light, cheerful eyes, she was the exact opposite of the devilish man next to her.

The woman smiled at Haddock, like how my mom had sometimes smiled at me when she was kissing me goodnight.

"Haddock." She said warmly.

Haddock nodded back, a huge smile gracing his mouth.

"Mum." He said, then turned to look at the man "Dad."

The man smiled at him, a warm, fatherly smile, and nodded.

"We got your message." Sigyn said "You're description of Egypt's situation is much like what we've been hearing of the others. Azanroth and the other Lords are rising in Nifleheim. Surt and the Muspellsheimers are stirring, too."

"Meanwhile," Loki said "The Greeks are at the dawn of a Second Titan War. Evil is rising on all sides, hemming us in."

"If Egypt falls, the effect will be like a stack of dominoes." Haddock said "I cannot sit idly by whilst we work our way to destruction. Can you not petition my case to the Allfather? Give me time. I ask for nothing else."

Loki frowned at him "You know the Law. As set down by The Alfadir. We cannot go against it."

"Egypt can fend for itself, my son." Sigyn begged "Let it go."

Haddock considered there words for a minute, then shook his head.

"I cannot back down." He sounded mournful "I gave my word to Iskandar that I would protect the Kane children."

I gave an involuntary gasp of breath. Iskandar had asked Haddock to protect us? Why?

Haddock was looking squarely at Loki.

"The Word of a Trickster is his bond. He cannot escape it, he cannot run from it, it binds him as strongly as the ribbon Gleipnir once bound Fenris. A Trickster's word is Law.' You taught me that, Dad. Long, long ago. I believed it then. Make me believe it now."

Loki shuffled uncomfortably. "This plan of yours is insane. Impossible. Has no chance of succeeding."

Haddock grinned at him. "So, basically, like all of my other plans?"

Loki laughed a deep, resonating laugh.

"Very well, Haddock. Go. You have my blessing, and my pride."

Sigyn turned on him "You cannot let him, Loki! He will never succeed!"

Loki looked at her calmly "He's your son, Sigyn. Do you truly think I can stop him from doing whatever he wants?"

Sigyn literally doused herself in fire. The sand that made up her image was peeled away with the heat of her rage. Finally, she relaxed. The sand reformed on her image.

"I'm sorry." She apologised. Then she glared at Haddock, and I saw another side to this loving, caring mom: the towering inferno.

"_You_." She hissed, spitting out the word like it was the mother of all swearwords. "Be careful. Or I'll go to Hel and conspire for a way to kill you myself."

Haddock smirked at her. "Love you too, Mum."

He swiped a hand through her sand image just before she burst into flames again.

Loki gazed mournfully at Haddock. "You do realise you've condemned your own, poor father to a year of helfire and brimstone?"

Haddock laughed. "Goodnight, Dad."

Loki smiled at him, a playful twinkle in his eye.

"Goodnight, son." He said, before collapsing into sand.

Haddock painstakingly collected the sand and emptied it into the pouch he carried. Then he wiped the floor of the runes and symbols he had drawn. It was only then that he spoke.

"You can come out now, Carter. I can hear you."

I froze. Then, slowly and carefully, I walked out of my hiding spot.

Haddock didn't seem particularly angry. He just calmly sat on the floor, and motioned me to do the same.

I sat, weary of an attack.

Haddock sighed "If I wanted to kill you, Mr Kane, I would have done it when you gave yourself away halfway through my private conversation-" I silently cursed "-Or when you walked through the door to my secret hideaway-" I cursed again "-Or when you were failing at being stealthy. I wish only to talk."

"Okay then." I said guardedly "Talk."

"You saw that, didn't you?"

I nodded.

"And? What did you think?"

Truth be told, I didn't know what to think. Despite whatever Sadie says, I'm not clueless [Quiet, Sadie, I'm telling this part!]. Far from it. And I knew ancient mythology like nobody's business. But what I saw Haddock doingâ€¦ That scared me. And Haddock scared me too. Not Haddock himself, but what he represented. Because if Haddock was what I thought he was, then everything I knew, everything I was beginning to understand, was about to change. In a few days my world had been turned upside down. I wasn't keen for it to happen again.

Then I remembered something Zia had said to me back at her shrine.

"I thinkâ€¦ you're either a very interesting personâ€¦ or a very dangerous one."

Haddock laughed.

"A good answer." He said "Now go, Carter Kane. Get some rest."

As I turned to go, he said something else, almost absentmindedly.

"Tonight will be badâ€¦ And tomorrow will be beyond imagining."

I turned to him "What?"

He smiled sadly. "It's from a book. Used to be a must-read for magicians, before they got too high and mighty for the human race. Go, Carter. Sleep. The tests are tomorrow."

I really didn't need to be reminded of the tests. I walked out, sparing one more glance for the strange boy with the parents in the sand.

Cut to next morning. I was still reeling with the shock of the bombshell Haddock had dropped. I had talked to Alexander the Great?

"Butâ€¦ How is that possible?" I asked "Alexander died. Thousands of people saw him die. Everyone agrees that Alexander the Great died at Babylon."

Haddock looked squarely at me. "One of my closest friends has the ability to visit people just before they die and offer them another chance at life. Is it not likely that Alexander, one of the greatest military leaders ever, could do such a thing?"

Zia still looked shocked.

"Alexander wanted to keep the children safe." Haddock said, looking at her intensely. He gestured to the portal that was opening even as

we spoke. "Is this what he had in mind?"

Zia looked hesitant for a moment, then made up her mind when she saw a magician step through.

"Use the obelisk."

"What?" Sadie asked.

"The obelisk at the entrance, fool! You have five minutes, perhaps less, before Desjardins sends orders for your execution. Flee, and destroy Set. The Demon Days begin at sundown. All portals will stop working. You need to get as close as possible to Set before that happens."

"Zia," I begged "Come with us."

Zia shook her head. "I cannot betray the House."

Sadie dragged at my wrist, and we stumbled towards the obelisk. Zia called out.

"Carter!"

I turned, half hoping that she'd come with us.

She didn't move.

"Desjardins will order me to hunt you down," she warned. "Do you understand?"

Unfortunately, I did. The next time we met, we would be enemies.

Haddock walked up behind Zia, whispered something in her ear, and then hit her in the back of the head. She crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

"Don't just stand there, run!" he yelled at us, shooting past.

"What the hell was that for?!" I almost screamed at him.

Haddock looked at me calmly. "If she plays her cards right, the House need never know she betrayed them. She'll only be out for a half an hour at best, so I did her a favour. Now, are we going to stand around chatting all day or can we get on?"

Without a choice, we set off after him.

The magician ran after us, yelling at us to surrender.

"Yeah," Haddock snorted, sending two small fireballs in an attempt to scare the magician off. "Because that always works."

The magician then tried using his words to greater affect. More specifically, in summoning two sphinxes to attack us.

"Good!" Haddock yelled, ducking a sphinx's claw. The offending instrument slammed into a pillar, crashing into the ground and joining the rest of the rubble. "Now it get's

interesting!"

Haddock's definition of interesting was not the same as mine.

Eventually we made it to the obelisk.

"Sadie!" Haddock yelled. "Get to work on that portal!"

"But I don't know what to do!" Sadie protested.

Haddock was uncompromising.

"Then find out!" he snapped.

Both he and I turned to face the approaching sphinxes.

"You take the one on the left. I'll take the one on the right." Haddock said, his tone serious. Then his face split into a grin. "First one to kill his sphinx gets to snog Zia."

"Hey!" I yelled, but Haddock was already in the middle of the action.

He easily jumped over my sphinx, and then self-combusted in mid-air. I heard Sadie scream from behind me [Yes you did, Sadie, don't deny it], but since I saw his mom self-immolate, I figured it was a family gift.

Turned out I was right. Haddock passed through the flames completely unharmed. But apparently the fire was a magic clothes changer.

Haddock was dressed in flaming red armour, ornately carved with Nordic Runes. He had several knives at his belt, and a long sword in his hand. His helmet made no effort to cover his face, leaving that to a scrap of chainmail. On top of it were two ivory horns. Several knives were attached to his belt.

I couldn't help but feel envious. Haddock looked like a cross between a knight and a Viking. What did look like? A dumbass kid with a big knife. [For the last time, Sadie. Shut. Up.]

Haddock rolled, narrowly avoiding a swipe of the sphinxes claws. He leapt over the one he had designated for me, and flipped over his sword.

"_BemÃ¼hen, Ek bjÃ³Ã°a Ã¼Ã° at vaka_." He yelled. A fiery red rune blazed on his sword, a 'K' without the bottom diagonal. The sword erupted into a fiery blaze. Haddock raised it above his head and brought it crashing down on the sphinxes neck.

Fire spread across the sphinx, a white hot fire that dissolved the sphinx into thick grey ash.

Suddenly the ground shook. The sky darkened, and Sadie yelled, "Yes!" The obelisk glowed with purple light, humming with power. Sadie touched the stone and yelped. She was sucked inside and disappeared.

"Sadie!" I yelled. In my moment of distraction, my sphinx slammed into me, knocking me to the ground. My sword skittered away. My rib cage went _crack!_ and my chest erupted in pain. The heat coming off the creatures was unbearable " it was like being crushed under a hot oven. I stretched out my fingers towards the obelisk.

Just a few inches too far. I could hear the other sphinxes coming, the magician chanting, "Hold him! Hold him!" With my last bit of strength, I lurched towards the obelisk, every nerve in my body screaming with pain. My fingertips touched the base, and the world went black.

Suddenly I was lying on cold, wet stone. I was in the middle of a huge public plaza. Rain was pouring down, and the chilly air told me I was no longer in Egypt. Sadie was somewhere close by, yelling in alarm.

The bad news: I'd brought the sphinx with me.

It was still on my chest, glaring down at me, its back steaming in the rain, its smoky white eyes inches from my face. I tried to remember the Egyptian word for fire. Maybe if I could set the monster ablaze " but my mind was too full of panic.

Suddenly, I heard the sound of metal on concrete.

Haddock leapt into the sphinx, tackling it to the ground. He placed one arm on its neck, and scratched another rune into its chest, this one a 'H' with another sideways line underneath the first.

"_Geta askr_." He intoned.

Roots sprung out of the sphinx. A trunk and branches grew. Eventually a new ash tree was growing in the middle of a Paris street.

"Dammit." Haddock cursed "I can never get that cantrip right."

I tried to rise but couldn't.

Sadie stumbled over. "Carter! Oh god, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, too. Just in case you're wondering." Haddock deadpanned.

"You!" a voice hissed.

We all turned. A tall, thin figure in a black, hooded raincoat stood there. She threw off her coat, and a woman in a leopard-skin acrobatic suit glared at Haddock, showing off her fangs and her lamp like yellow eyes.

"Bast!" Sadie and I yelled.

"Cat." Haddock acknowledged, gripping his sword.

Bast looked at us.

"You have no idea what you've started, do you?" she asked.

**A/N: This is where it gets interesting, folks.**

**Runes featured in this chapter:**

**Kaen: Rune of Fire. Haddock's Ruinmark (more on that later)**

**Hagall: Rune of Destruction. Also Rune of Greetings. These are Vikings, after all.**

**Translations:**

**Bem¹/₄hen, Ek bj³/₄Ã^oa Ã³/₄Ã^o at vaka: Endeavour, I command you to awaken. (Yay! Book reference!)**

**Geta askr: Be ash. Can also be translated as Be Ash (tree), hence the confusion.**

**Norse Mythology:**

**Loki: God of Mischief and Lies.**

**Sigyn: Wife of Loki. Goddess of Marriage and Family. (Bit like Hera, but less cross)**

**Asgard: Citadel of the Gods.**

**Fenris: Third son of Loki, Demonic Wolf.**

**Gleipnir: Magic ribbon that bound Fenris.**

**The Allfather: Another name for Odin, General of the Gods**

**Azanroth: (OC) King of Nifleheim**

**Nifleheim: the ice world that houses the sworn enemies of the Gods**

**Surt: King of Muspellsheim**

**Muspellsheim: the fire world**

**The Alfadir: The Spirit of Creation**

**BTW: Virtual Cookies for those who get the book Haddock is quoting from.**

End
file.